



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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**HB 513**

**DATE: February 12, 2025**

**SPONSOR:**

**ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation committee**

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**County Office of Animal Services)**

### **Criminal Law - Animal Abuse or Neglect - Penalties**

House Bill 513 would prevent a person from keeping more than 5 roosters per acre up to a maximum of 25 roosters total. The bill has exceptions for the number of roosters if the owner is a member of 4-H or the Future Farmers of America, a commercial poultry producer (as defined), a school, or a government owned animal shelter. The Maryland Department of Agriculture is responsible for enforcing this proposed law by is permitted to work in cooperation with animal control to enforce this law.

This is important legislation as it places a reasonable limit on the number of roosters a person can keep, is consistent with good animal husbandry practices, and promotes healthy flock dynamics.

Additionally, the two most recent cases that resulted in convictions for cockfighting in Montgomery County involved properties where the proposed restrictions were exceeded by a large margin. Both properties were known to Montgomery County to have an excess number of roosters prior to the cockfighting investigations, but the owners were able to maintain acceptable housing and care for the birds to prevent their seizure related to cruelty or neglect until sufficient evidence of cockfighting could be developed. They maintained this acceptable standard of care for the birds because of the amount of money they made from their breeding.

House Bill 513 places a restriction that will only affect a person who owns roosters with a nefarious intent.

The Montgomery County Office of Animal Services supports Senate Bill 1055 and would urge the adoption of a favorable report by the Committee.